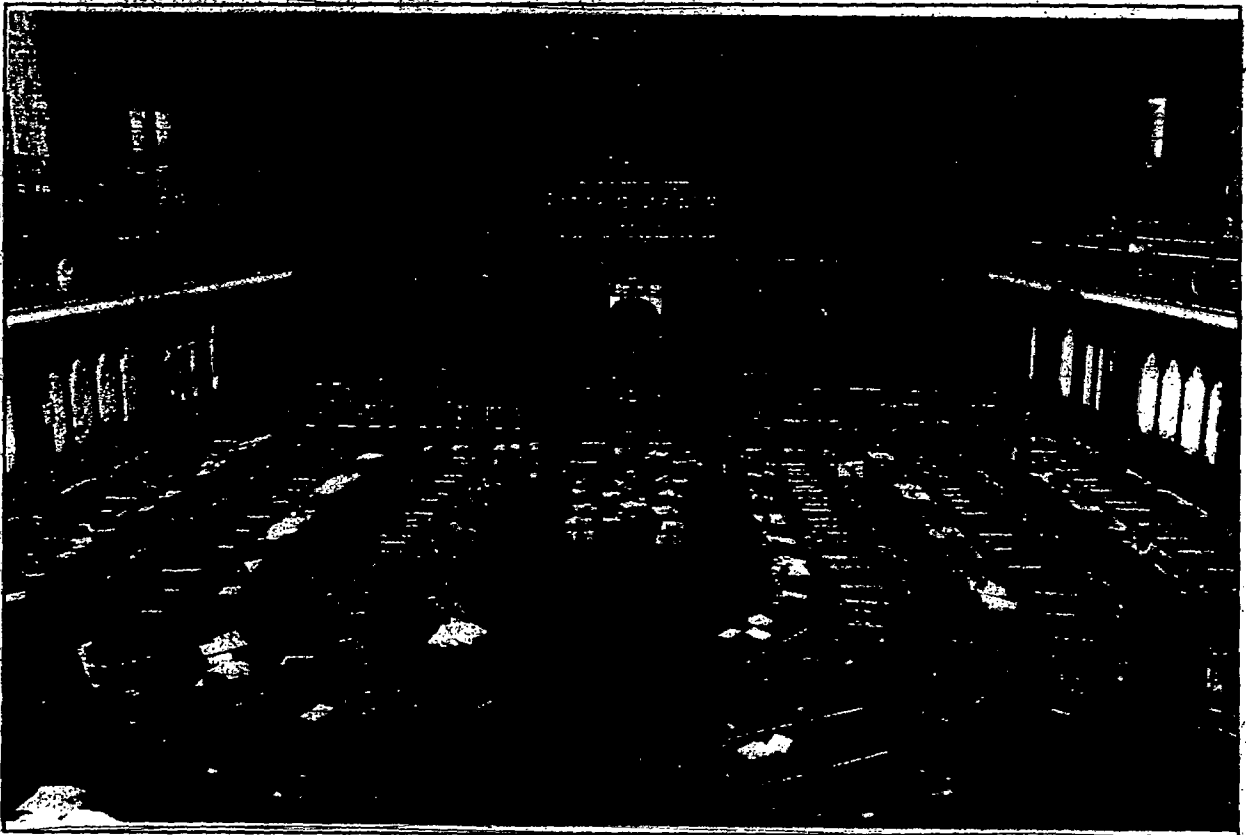


Growth Of Legislative Council In Karnataka

- Basavaraj N. Akki

Mysore was one of the earliest native states to start formation of democratic institutions in India. So it attracted the worldwide attention by its administrative reforms and welfare schemes, even though it was ruled by British Commissioners for fifty years



The early part of this century in Mysore witnessed new reforms in the field of education, administration and industrial growth. This credit of new era goes to Dewans who run the administration

and responsible for making the tiny Mysore state into Model state in India.

The Legislative Council was established in 1907. The credit goes to his Highness the Late Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV and

Dewan V.P. Madhav Rao. The principal objective of the council was to associate with the Government a certain number of non-official gentlemen qualified by practical experience and knowledge of local conditions

and requirements to assist government in making laws and regulations.

Process of legislation

For over a decade after the electoral reforms of 1894, there were no changes of importance in the constitution of the Assembly. Until then the Legislation was entirely in the hands of the Government who in their discretion consulted the Assembly on such measures as were considered by them to be of sufficient importance. Legislative Department was first organised in 1886 as a separate department under the superintendence of an officer designated 'Legislative Secretary' and later it became a branch of the state secretariat.

The question of associating a certain number of non-officials in the process of law making in a legislative body was raised by the members of the Representative Assembly in 1890 and 1893. The subject was broached again in the Assembly in 1906, and it was urged by the members that the powers and functions to be vested in the council should be as such as not to interfere with the utility and

importance of the Assembly. The reply of the Government was that if a Legislative Council was established it would be so constituted as not to affect the usefulness of the Assembly. Thus Legislative measures had received full consideration and attention at the hands of successive Dewans and councillors.

50 Member Council

In these circumstances it was considered expedient by His Highness the Maharaja to establish a Legislative Council, in order to associate non-official gentlemen qualified by practical experience and knowledge of local conditions and requirements in the actual process of law making.

With this end in view the Legislative Council Act I of 1907 was promulgated which consisted a regular Legislative Council for the making of laws and regulations in Mysore. In addition to the Dewan as President and the members were ex-officio members. The council consisted of not less than 10 and not more than 15 additional members nominated by the Government, of these not

more than two-fifths were non-officials. The minimum and maximum number of additional members was increased from 15 to 21 respectively by Regulation I of 1914 and the maximum was further increased to 30 by Regulation XI of 1919 consisting of 12 officials and eight non-officials who were elected under the Reforms introduced according to the Regulation No. XIX of 1923. Then the strength of the Legislative Council was fixed at fifty, of these 28 were nominated and 22 were elected members by various associations and institutions. The term of the council was fixed for three years. The council was permitted to vote grants to move cut motions. The quorum for a meeting was fixed at half of total members. In the meantime a committee was appointed under the Chairmanship of Sri Brajendranath Seal the then Vice-Chancellor of Mysore University. Its recommendations were fully introduced.

Committee for Reforms

With the growth of political consciousness in the people as a result of agitation carried out in the rest of India

for the establishment of responsible government, the then Government of Mysore appointed a committee in the year 1935 under the Chairmanship of K.R. Srinivas Iyengar for the purpose of examining the working of the representative institutions in the State and to formulate comprehensive proposal as to the further changes which might be desirable in order to secure the steady and harmonious constitutional progress of the state. The report of the committee was submitted to the Government on 31st August 1939 and a promulgation was issued by the Maharaja embodying his acceptance of the several reforms suggested by the committee and directing the Government to take immediate action for their implementations some of the important feature of the recommendations accepted by the Government were that.

1. In the matter of legislation, a Bill should be first passed by the Representative Assembly and then introduced in the Legislative Council after it was passed by the Council sent together with a

statement of opinions expressed by the Assembly thereon.

2. The strength of the council was raised from 50 to 68, 44 being filled by election. For the first time the council was given power to have a non-official President in place of the Dewan and non-official Deputy President in place of the member of the council.

3. The elected representatives of the people were also given a place in the Executive Council so that Legislature was able to influence the nature of advice and assistance which the Ex-Council tendered to Maharaja, Dewan and no less than four ministers of whom not less than two should be non-officials selected from among the elected members of the Representative Assembly and Legislative Council and such ministers were eligible to hold any portfolio of the administration.

This Act consisting of above recommendations of the Government was promulgated by His Highness the Maharaja on 30 April 1940 which was known as Government of Mysore Act 1940 and it marked the

turning point in the constitutional reforms of the State.

Thus constitutional Assembly was constituted in 1947 and when it was in the process of drafting a constitution for Mysore. Political changes of far reaching character were taking place in the rest of India. As a result of these political developments in India a constituent Assembly to frame the constitution for India was established at the centre and since that body was framing a constitution for entire India. And it was at that time the Government of Mysore decided not to proceed further with the work of the constituent Assembly of Mysore.

Accordingly the Maharaja of Mysore issued a proclamation on 25th November 1949 ordering that the constitution of India adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India shall also be constitution for the State of Mysore and dissolved the two Houses of Legislature. On 15 December 1949. Then after the first General Elections a council was constituted in Mysore with 42 members.